

CHRONICLE AND COMMENT OF THE STAGE



Nita Naldi in "The Passing Show of 1918."



Margaret Mayo off for France.

Peggy Wood in "Maytime."



Myrtle Young Century Grove Midnight Revue



Marguerite Sylva at the Palace.

"Serious Drama"

By Heywood Brown

IT IS a curious thing, but no actor, or playwright either, ever thinks it half so important to make people laugh as to make them cry. Everybody has seen some vaudeville player or other behave in the most charming fashion with jokes or somersaults or glass balls, and then spoil everything after the encore by coming out to recite a piece about a faithful dog or a faithless wife, or both. Plays of this same sort are commonly referred to as "serious drama," as if a certain stigma attached to "The Boomerang," or "Polly with a Past," or "Potash and Perlmutter" simply because they were funny.

And yet, on the whole, we are convinced that comedy makes a much greater demand upon an author's sincerity than tragedy. Probably you would know more about a man if you swapped anecdotes with him for half an hour than if you sat down to have "a serious talk."

When anybody begins a conversation with "Here's a subject upon which I feel very strongly" it is almost certain that he doesn't feel strongly about it at all. The very fact that he emphasizes his feeling shows that his emotion is merely something that he has churned up in his conscious mind. Probably the subject is the physical valuation of railroads or George Meredith's style, or some subject about which he thinks he ought to have a definite opinion and arguments and all that. If you want to know what he really feels deeply about it is necessary to catch him unawares. As like as not he doesn't know himself.

With the exception of a very small number of conscious satirists, nobody pretends to feel strongly about the things of which he writes in humorous vein. And yet he does if the humor is at all spontaneous. Practically all blazing humor comes from the unconscious mind. It is down in our mental roots, and only accident or inspiration can bring it up. But the man who wants to write a serious play or story or poem does not have to depend on such fugitive occurrences. He can work the thing out. There was Mr. Poe, for instance, who decided that "nevermore" was the most mournful word in the language, and that he could get a smashing fine tragic effect simply by repeating it now and again in lines of proper cadence. Poe was ambitious to write humorous pieces as well, and tried just as hard upon them, and today nobody remembers those stories. They were synthetic humor and they died.

However, there is some justice in the superior respect in which the public holds the serious dramatist. His task may be easier, but it is usually better done. Arthur Wing Pinero probably felt more deeply about the folly of marrying women with long pasts than he did about the inadvisability of bringing up girls like boys, but "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" is a much more telling play than "The Amazons."

We have no desire to go so far afield. We are thinking specifically of "Friendly Enemies," which is distinctly a tailor-made play. The authors have succeeded quite admirably in devising emotional scenes for their characters, and have fallen not a little short of the mark when they have attempted to set them into comedy. After all, you can cry at things you don't like. Laughter has to be wooed and nobody is so quick to spot a faker.

Nora, Ibsen's Nora, left her home because in eight years she had never had a serious conversation with her husband. That was foolish of her. She felt that she didn't really know him. But it's ten to one that if she had had those serious conversations on the physical valuation of railroads and the style of George Meredith she would have found that there simply wasn't anything to know.

We are not overly sympathetic with

the notion that the stage must concern itself only with trivial things while the war is on. After all, America is going to tremendous lengths to make our way of life safe. This, then, is just the time to make that life as full and as fine as possible. In that way America dignifies the death of the men in France.

"Allegiance" To Be Seen This Week

Mr. William Faversham and Miss Maxine Elliott will present "Allegiance," a new modern play by the Prince and Princess Pierre Troubetzkoy (Amelie Rives) at Maxine Elliott's Theatre on Thursday night, August 1, with the following cast: Miss Blanche Yurka, Miss Evelyn Varden, Carl Anthony, Harrison Hunter, Carl Sauerman, Charles Meredith, Charles Laite, Charles Hampden, Charles Kraus, Herbert Belmore, William Read, Jr., Margery Lytle and others.

Prize Offered for American Drama

The success of "Inside the Lines," written by Earl Derr Biggers and now in its eleventh week at the Copley Theatre, Boston, has suggested to Henry Jewett, the director, and Herbert Pattee, the manager of that playhouse, the idea of offering a prize for a play especially adapted for acting by the Henry Jewett Players. For the last two years this organization has appeared in plays by the most notable dramatists of the world. They have interpreted Shaw, Ibsen, Pinero, Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, Oscar Wilde, Henry Arthur Jones, Barrie, Brighouse, Sheridan, Goldsmith and other European dramatists, but they have rarely appeared in a play by an American.

But Mr. Biggers is an American, and his "Inside the Lines" is an American play. With the many problems of the hour offering unlimited inspiration, the present moment seems a timely one to give the American dramatist an exceptional opportunity. Therefore, to give stimulus to his energy and his ambition, the management of the Copley Theatre offers a prize of \$500, in addition to a royalty, which will be given to the writer of the play, in three or four acts, which, in the opinion of competent judges, shall be best suited for presentation by the Henry Jewett Players. It must be wholesome in tone, free from any trace of morbidity, and the contest will be open to any one in New England.

An manuscripts must be typewritten and addressed to Prize Play Department, Copley Theatre, Boston, Mass. They must be received on or before January 1, 1919. For detailed rules of the competition write to same address.

Many New Plays Will Be Booked By the Shuberts

Lee and J. J. Shubert and their allies have made out the following schedule of productions, which will be strictly adhered to. This list covers some of the productions which were seen in New York last season and others which are now in the making for early showing in New York and elsewhere.

The theatres in which these attractions will be seen are situated in all the important cities and one, two and three-night stands from the Atlantic to the Pacific, including all the important points on the Northern Pacific, the Southern Pacific, the Union Pacific and all the Western roads, all of the east of New England and throughout the South and the Middle West.

Under the plan of operation pursued by the Shuberts, any company can now be booked all through the country direct with all the owners and managers of the different theatres.

A detailed list of the more important theatres operated and booked direct by the Messrs. Shubert follows:

In New York: The Winter Garden, the Astor, the Casino, the Forty-fourth Street Theatre, the Lyric, the Shubert, Maxine Elliott's Theatre, Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, the Booth (in conjunction with Mr. Winthrop Ames), the Comedy, the New Capital, at Forty-seventh Street and Broadway; the Princess (in conjunction with F. Ray Comstock), the Bijou, the Plymouth (in conjunction with Arthur Hopkins), the Broadhurst (in conjunction with Mr. George Broadhurst), the Forty-eighth Street Theatre (in conjunction with Mr. William A. Brady), the Selwyn (in conjunction with the Messrs. Selwyn), the Garrick, the Bronx Opera House (in conjunction with Cohan & Harris), Loew's Seventh Avenue (in conjunction with Marcus Loew). In Brooklyn: the Brooklyn-Majestic, Brooklyn Teller's Shubert (in conjunction with Mr. Leo C. Teller). In Newark: The Broad Street Theatre (in conjunction with the Acme Theatre Company). In Philadelphia: The new million-dollar Sam S. Shubert Memorial Theatre, the Chestnut Street Opera House, the Lyric and the Adelphi. In Boston: the Boston Opera House, the Shubert, the Majestic, the Wilbur and the Plymouth theatres. In Chicago: The Garrick, the Studebaker and the Princess theatres.

In Atlantic City: The Globe Theatre; in Baltimore: The Auditorium; in Washington: the Belasco and Poli's (the latter in conjunction with Mr. Sylvester Poli); in Pittsburgh: the Alvin and the Pitt Theatres (the latter in conjunction with the Fort Pitt Theatre Company); in Providence: The Shubert-Majestic and the Providence Opera House; New Haven: the Shubert Theatre; Hartford, Conn.: Parsons Theatre; Springfield, Mass.: Court Square Theatre; Worcester, Mass.: Worcester Theatre; Bridgeport, Conn.: Park Theatre; Albany, N. Y.: Harmanus Bleeker Hall; Schenectady, N. Y.: Van Curler Opera House; Syracuse, N. Y.: Wieting Opera House; Rochester, N. Y.: Lyceum Theatre; Montreal, Canada: His Majesty's Theatre (in conjunction with Edwards and Driscoll, Ltd.); Toronto, Canada: Royal Alexandra Theatre; Buffalo, N. Y.: Teak Theatre; Cleveland, Ohio: Colonial Theatre; Detroit, Mich.: Garrick Theatre; Milwaukee, Wis.: Davidson Theatre (in conjunction with Sherman Brown); Minneapolis, Minn.: Metropolitan Opera House (in conjunction with L. N. Scott); St. Paul, Minn.: Metropolitan Opera House (in conjunction with L. N. Scott); Omaha, Neb.: Boyd's Theatre; Kansas City, Mo.: Shubert Theatre; St. Louis, Mo.: Jefferson and Garrick Theatres; Cincinnati, Ohio: Lyric Theatre; Indianapolis, Ind.: Shubert-Murphy Theatre; Columbus, Ohio: Hartman Theatre; New Orleans, La.: Lafayette Theatre; San Francisco, Cal.: Cort and Alcazar Theatres; Los Angeles, Cal.: Auditorium; Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake Theatre; and Denver, Col.: Broadway Theatre.

In order to fill the time in this list of theatres the Shuberts have secured the following attractions and productions: The Winter Garden production of "Sinbad" with Al Jolson; the Winter Garden production of "The Passing Show of 1918" and the Winter Garden production of "Doing Our Bit." Three companies of "The Eyes of Youth" (in conjunction with A. H. Woods), William Hodge in "A Cure for Curables," "The Blue Pearl," with George Nash; "Miss I Don't Know," a new musical play by Rida Johnson Young and Augustus Barratt, and "The Liberty Gun," by Victor Mapes. Later in the season the Shuberts personally will make a number of new productions which will be announced some time in the fall. William A. Brady will supply "Getting Together," "The Man Who Came Back," and two new plays. Messrs. Comstock, Elliott & Gest will provide "Chu Chin Chow," "The Wanderer," "Oh, Lady! Lady!" "Leave It to Jane," "Oh, Boy!" "Experience," "See You Later," "Oh, Look," with Harry Fox and the Dolly Sisters; Rock and White in a new musical play, and "Loyalty." A. H. Woods's list includes "Business Before Pleasure," two companies; "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath," two companies; "Friendly Enemies," two companies; "My Boy," "Why Worry?" "Under Orders," "Dolly of the Follies," "Road to Destiny," and "Emily's Apartment." From Oliver Morosoff's office come "A Bird of Paradise," "So Long, Letty," "Lombardi, Ltd.," "The Walk Offs," "One of Us" and "Look Pleasant."

The Selwyn Company will send out Nat C. Goodwin and the New York Astor Theatre cast of "Why Marry?", "Rock-a-Bye Baby," and Miss Jane Cowl in a new play, "Information, Please"; also "Tea for Three" and "Double Exposure." Mr. Lawrence Weber will provide Mr. William Collier in his new comedy, "Nothing but Lies," "The Very Idea," "Yes or No," and a new musical play called "Take It from Me." Mr. George Broadhurst's productions include "The Woman on the Index," "He Didn't Want to Do It" and "She Walked in Her Sleep." Mr. Arthur Hopkins will direct the tours of Mme. Nazimova, John Barrymore and "A Very Good Young Man," with Wallace Eddinger. Mr. Arthur Hammerstein will produce two new musical plays—"Sometime" and "Safety First." Mr. William Faversham and Miss Maxine Elliott will produce "Allegiance" and "Freedom." Mr. Faversham will be seen in a new play called "The Prince and the Pauper," and Miss Maxine Elliott will also have a new vehicle. Individual managerial attractions are as follows: Mr. John T. Williams will present Mr. Lionel Barrymore in "The Copperhead"; Jack Welch will offer the musical play "The Kiss Burglar"; Mme. Bertha Kalich and company will appear in "The Riddle Woman"; Mr. Lee Kugel will present "In a Net"; Walker Whiteside will have a new play; "The Man Who Stayed at Home" will be shown under the management of Mr. William Moore Patch; Mr. H. H. Frazee will present Miss Nora Bayes in a new musical play; Mr. Frederic McKay has a new play called "Another Man's Shoes"; Mr. Joseph Howard will offer a new musical farce called "In and Out." The San Carlo Grand Opera Company and the Scala Grand Opera Company will both play a season throughout the country. Mr. Winthrop Ames will have a sequel to "The Blue Bird" under the title of "The Betrothed." Mr. Richard Walton Tully will offer Guy Bates Post in "The Masquerader" and Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Drew in "Keep Her Smiling." Mr. Stuart Walker will present his play "Seventeen," which was such a hit at the Booth Theatre. There will be road tours of "The 13th Chair," "Seven Days' Leave," Harry Lauder and Thurston, the magician.

Big Show for Upton

Major Matthew B. Carson's 3d Development Battalion will have a big show at the Liberty Theatre, Camp Upton, on Thursday night, August 1. Mr. Murdock, of the United Booking Office, has taken an interest in the entertainment, and through the courtesy of that organization the bill will be made up of their artists. The colored detachment of the battalion will add the jazz jubilee and a battle royal boxing bout to the programme. The show is under the management of Lieutenant Lloyd M. Thomas.

Leon Errol

Leon Errol, the low comedy star of "Hitchy-Koo 1918," began his career in tragic roles. He left college in Sydney, Australia, his native city, to join a theatrical company presenting classical repertoire in the small towns on the continent. At first he was only one of the mob in "Julius Caesar," but as the tour became strenuous and salaries were cut the young actor was promoted to leading roles.

"Twenty years ago this very summer," says Errol, "I was playing Edmund in 'Lear' and Macduff in 'Macbeth.' You may not believe it, but I even attempted Romeo. For two performances a week, I used to king it as Menelaus in 'Helen.' In some towns I also kinged as Thesus, in Euripides' 'Iphigenia.' I pruned as 'Hamlet' once, but the company closed. To this day they owe me my last week's salary, two pounds ten.

"One of my favorite plays was 'The Spanish Tragedy,' in which I took two parts—the Spirit of Revenge and Hieronimo the Mad Judge. I wrote a burlesque on this drama, and produced it at a smoke concert in Sydney. I made a revenge reel, and turned old Hieronimo into a red-nosed comic. I planned to do the same with Hamlet, but a Sydney manager engaged me for low comedy parts, after my performance of Revenge.

"Whatever success I've had in comedy I owe to my training in tragedy. In fact, you can't play low comedy at all without an understanding of tragedy. I take my comedy more seriously than tragedy, and I believe that real comedy in these days is as rare as Hieronimo used to say of Justice: 'Tis a jewel so inestimable, I tell thee, God hath engrossed it all in his hands, and there is none but what comes from him.'"

Record Crowd Taxes Capacity of Luna

Luna Park, Coney Island, last Sunday surpassed any previous record of attendance in its history. The crowd was so immense that the entire special police reserves of the great amusement resort were kept busy handling the crowds at the entrance gates. Chief Higgins had to fall back on his old army experience of mob control and cut his men through the body of the enthusiastic masses to prevent crushing.

The new Luna ride, the Top; Over the Top, the Gyroplane, the Witching Waves, the Honeycomb Express, the Virginia Reel, and all the others were crowded with a laughing, cheering crowd of merry-makers.

Those Friendly Enemies

By Harriette Underhill

A week ago they got out some new programmes over at the Hudson Theatre. For reasons known only to the management and a few newspaper people who promised to be secret as the grave, the fall season had opened a couple of weeks ahead of itself.

The front cover of the programme arrests one's attention. It shows a lady with hennaed hair, clad in a green girdle and a yellow skirt liberally sprinkled with chrysanthemums. She is holding a tambourine, leaning on the Sphinx and burning incense in an ash receiver set on top of a card table. But this has nothing to do with the play.

Skipping the advertisements of perfumes, tires, and equestrian instruction and without stopping to learn what either men or women will wear one turns to the fifth page, which says in large capitals, "Sam Bernard," "Louis Mann," "Friendly Enemies."

This doesn't mean what it says though there are those who insisted that the title could have but one meaning. We were rather inclined to agree with these misanthropes when we called up the office and said that we should like to interview one of the stars and the answer came back over the wire, "Better make it a joint interview."

Samuel Shipman and Aaron Hoffman have carefully divided the honors in the show. When the final curtain falls you don't know whether you love Karl Pfeifer or Henry Block better.

The night after the show opened we were summoned backstage and into the living room of the Pfeifers, where a rehearsal was going on. Natalie Manning, who is Nora in the play and Mr. Mann's niece in real life, had been guilty of a heinous offense. She had said "yes, sir," instead of "yes, Mr. Pfeifer," in the last act. "You see," said Mr. Mann, "she is only seventeen and this is her first part, but it will come all right." And here we caught sight of the good natured countenance of Sam Bernard. He had removed his gray wig and was mopping the furrows from his brow.

Out in the front of the theatre where one may wear Georgeette crepe and sit under an electric fan the heat had been almost unbearable. On the stage one worked under immense arched lights and wore dinner clothes, so we didn't fancy that Mr. Mann and Mr. Bernard would care much about talking to a newspaper person. Mr. Bernard we know quite well. Once before we have interviewed him, when he was up at the Century, and then he was backing Roamer the same as he was the day Old Koenig won. So we feel quite well acquainted.

The friendly enemies sat on the table, the one where the battle of the Marne is fought with Mrs. Pfeifer's best china. They had their arms around each other, or rather Louis Mann had his left arm across Sam Bernard's shoulder. Mr. Bernard introduced us to Mr. Mann and the interview was on.

Just as had been predicted, all the way through the interview they kept interrupting each other. But not to talk about themselves. No indeed! Each insisted on talking about the other.

"Do you like the show?" asked Mr. Mann, "and isn't Mr. Bernard great?" "Ach, Louis," interrupted Sam, "how you talk. Why, this is almost a new game for me and it is your territory. I have always been in musical shows or in vaudeville, so I have much to learn. It is wonderful to work with a man like Mr. Mann."

"That is just like Sam; he is so modest. Why, he was the first man who ever received \$1,000 in vaudeville." "Yes, and for what? Just for my nonsense. It is nothing. Why, Louis here has played with every great artist in the world and he reads all the time; and do you know how much he sleeps every night? I will tell you. Two hours!" "Tell about the time you played over in the Museum in Boston. That's a good story." "Why waste time talking about ancient history? Do you know how many languages Mr. Mann speaks? Thirteen, including Chinese and Hindu. Does it seem possible that any person could learn thirteen languages?"

"And I should rather be a humanist any day than a linguist. Sam says that he speaks three languages, American, dialect and box-office. It is like a tonic to work with him."

And then we spoke. What we said was, "The millennium has come." "What did you say?" said Sam and Louis in unison. "Nothing at all," said we.

Margaret Mayo Unit Ready for the Call

Margaret Mayo, who sails for France shortly at the head of the Margaret Mayo unit of theatrical people, believes that the members of her company are proving as much as if not more than any one else the sacrifices being made by theatrical people in their effort to do something for the soldiers.

Elizabeth Bryce, when she heard that Ray Cox would be unable to accompany the unit, promptly cancelled theatrical bookings covering more than a year and offered her services, which were immediately accepted.

Two others in the unit are Will Morrissey and Roland Young. The former, who will act as interlocutor for the unit, has written a new song called "When You Get Back to the Girl You Left Behind." He has dedicated it to the unit and will sing it while abroad.

Mr. Young, who will be remembered for his performances in "Good Gracious Annabelle," "A Successful Calamity" and "The Gypsy Trail," has been released from a long term contract by Arthur Hopkins to make the trip.

Authors Give Plays For Our Soldiers

Austin Strong is the author of "The Drums of Oude," one of the first two plays given to the government gratuitously for the use of dramatic directors in soldier productions. The other is "Back of the Ballet," by George Middleton. A committee, with Augustus Thomas as chairman, was formed recently by the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities to collect plays on which publication rights and royalties will have been waived for camp use.

Among the authors who have already offered plays are Augustus Thomas, R. H. Burnside, Edward Milton Royle, Austin Strong, Franklyn Sargent, Edward Peple, George Middleton, Jerome K. Jerome and George Hobart. Mr. Hobart has offered his entire list of productions, including "Experience," "Every Woman," "Every Wife," "Wildfire" and "Just Around the Corner."

Plays should be sent to Mr. Strong, War Department, Commission on Training Camp Activities, at 1520 Broadway, New York City.